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SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PHUM](#) [KDEM](#) [AFGHANISTAN](#)

SUBJECT: CHR-60: ITALIANS SHOP STRATEGIES ON AFGHANISTAN,
IRAN, DEMOCRACY CAUCUS

REF: A. A) BUTLER/BASS E-MAIL JAN 26

[1](#)B. B)STATE 13279

Classified By: Pol M/C Tom Countryman, reasons 1.5 (b) and (d)

[1](#)1. (U) Italian MFA Human Rights Director Giuseppe Calvetta reviewed with us January 27 ministry thinking on several CHR-related elements following the January 21 meeting of EU human rights experts (COHOM).

Iran

[1](#)2. (C) The Irish presidency would be contacting Tehran in the coming days to try to organize the next session of the EU-Iranian HR dialogue for the first week in March. EU members were cautiously optimistic that Tehran would agree to resume the dialogue despite lingering anger over EU support for the Canadian UNGA resolution. Perhaps hedging their bets, COHOM experts had agreed to adopt the same approach on Iran at CHR-60 as last year: the EU would not/not co-sponsor a resolution, but member states sitting on CHR would support a resolution. The open question was whether Canada intended to sponsor a resolution again this year.

Possible resolutions: Chechnya,

[1](#)3. (C) EU members were pondering how to proceed regarding possible resolutions on China, Iraq and Chechnya and Calvetta asked for U.S. intentions on all three. Chechnya posed a special challenge for the MFA; it had asked the Council of Ministers for a formal recommendation on how to proceed on the issue, given PM Berlusconi's oft-expressed (including, on occasion, when it shouldn't be) personal support for President Putin.

Afghanistan,

[1](#)4. (C) Regarding an Afghan resolution, we replied that informal soundings in Washington revealed strong opposition to a resolution. We believed it would be counterproductive to continue to criticize the current proto-government for a situation largely created by its predecessors. However, the U.S. might be prepared to countenance a chairman's statement, if it concentrated on deficit areas where the international community, or specific donors, were committed to supporting the Afghan government to correct them -- i.e., a statement that was forward-looking and encouraging rather than critical of circumstances largely created in the past.

[1](#)5. (C) Calvetta tried again, suggesting the resolution could be 'technical.' We replied that our clear impression was that Washington would not support that approach; since the bulk of attention invariably would focus on 'resolution' rather than the 'technical' qualifier, it would have the same effect of sending the wrong signals to the Afghans and to donors.

Iraq

[1](#)6. (C) Calvetta wondered if the U.S. might contemplate a similar approach (i.e. chairman's statement identifying elements/areas that would be focus of international community's assistance to a nascent government) regarding Iraq. We replied that we were uninstructed, but judged it highly unlikely that the U.S. would countenance even a chairman's statement, given the timing of CHR-60 relative to transition process in Iraq and the temptation for mischief-making from those critical of U.S. policy in the region.

Democracy Caucus

[1](#)7. (C) Reaffirming Italy's strong push to help develop a democracy caucus in UN fora, beginning with CHR-60, Calvetta said Italy was itching to do more but was having difficulty developing tactics for proceeding. He lamented the

difficulties involved in persuading more desirable, democratic countries to buck comfortable regional rotations and take on regional offenders who invested lots of time, energy -- not to mention other sources of suasion -- in winning seats in UN fora. For example, how could core Community of Democracy members persuade Uruguay to compete actively against Cuba for a CHR seat? Italy was working to

develop the CD's practical promise, but it was difficult to overcome the habits and psychology of the current regional groupings. We suggested that Italy and other interested, activist CD members needed to brainstorm on incentives we might, individually or collectively, offer to such countries to offset the perceived risks

Swedish Grading Curve

18. (C) In an aside as the discussion concluded, Calvetta noted that the Swedish rep had announced at the January 21 COHOM Stockholm's publication of its annual assessment of human rights. The assessment reportedly concluded that adherence to human rights norms had improved across the globe, with two notable exceptions: the United States and the Russian Federation. Shaking his head, Calvetta said he'd asked for a copy of the report and was told that it thus far was only available in Swedish.
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